



The President's Daily Brief

18 August 1972

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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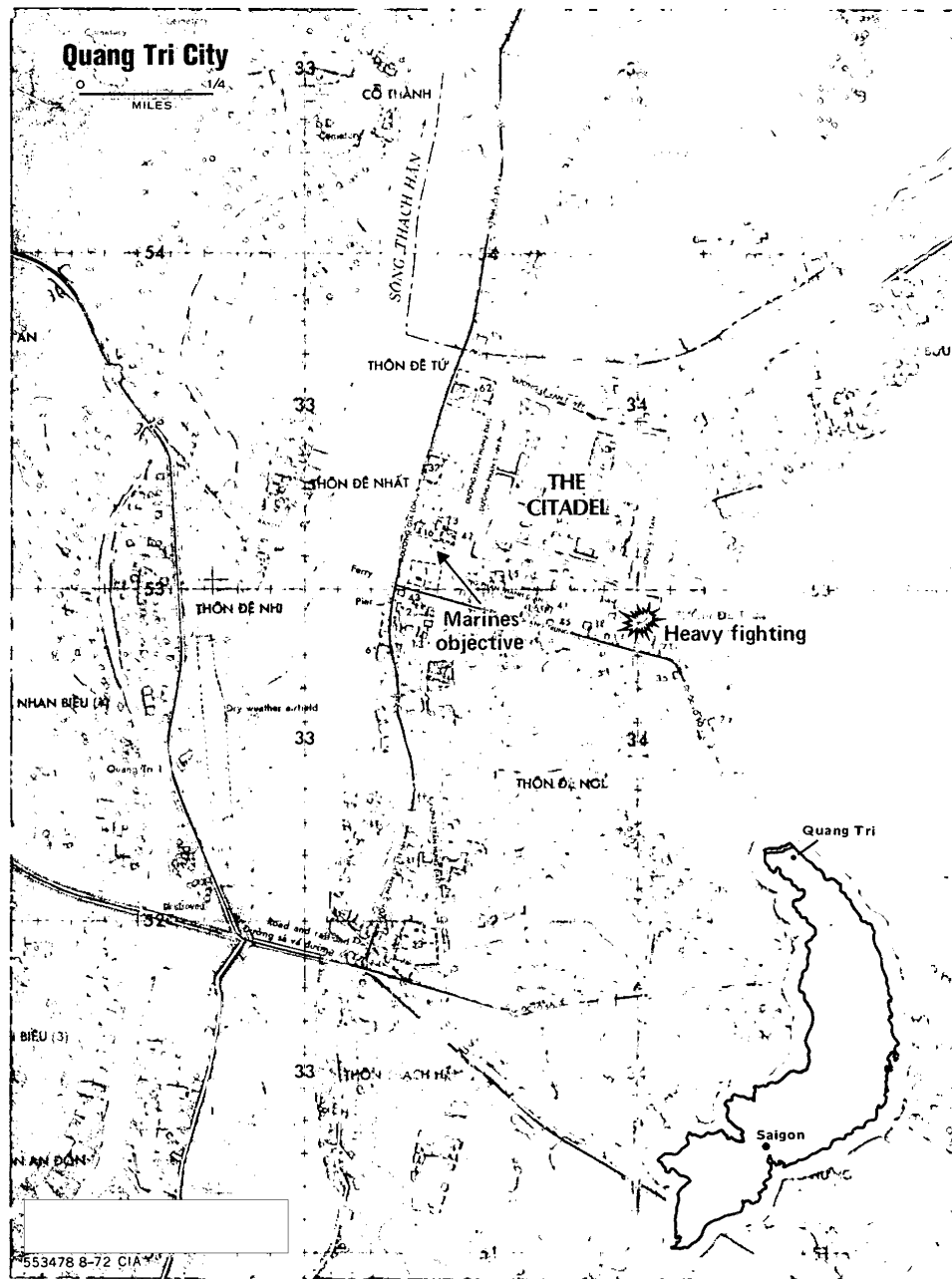
PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

In South Vietnam, heavy fighting has erupted in the Quang Tri City area as government forces are nearing the Communist-held citadel. (Page 1)

Hanoi has published an editorial in the party daily which makes it clear that the North Vietnamese consider some of their supporters more dependable at the moment than the USSR and China. (Page 2)

The death of Morocco's strong man, Major General Mohamed Oufkir, will increase the tension and instability caused by the attempt on King Hassan's life. (Page 3)

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**VIETNAM**

Heavy fighting has erupted in the Quang Tri City area as government forces are nearing the Communist-held citadel. South Vietnamese Marines engaged in sharp street fighting near the southern wall and moved against a well-entrenched enemy force defending the western side, the last portion outside the fortress wall still controlled by the Communists. South of Quang Tri City, South Vietnamese paratroopers fought a day-long battle with enemy forces some five miles from the citadel. Heavy Communist artillery and mortar fire was reported throughout the area.

The headquarters of the North Vietnamese 312th Division now appears to have shifted south from the staging area at Dong Hoi to within 20 miles of the DMZ.

The 312th is the last battle-tested infantry reserve remaining in North Vietnam. One of its regiments is already fighting in Quang Tri City, and the other two are apparently en route. The Communists have now committed elements of four infantry divisions--the 312th, 308th, 320B, and 325th--to the battle for Quang Tri City. Additionally, Hanoi's 304th Division is located not far south of the city.

Early today a rocket attack was directed at Da Nang causing heavy casualties and damage. No major new ground action has been reported in the southern provinces, although scattered fighting continues throughout the area.

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NORTH VIETNAM

Hanoi has again published caustic criticism of Moscow and Peking. In an editorial in the party daily on 17 August--an editorial termed "important" by Hanoi Radio--the North Vietnamese make it clear that they consider their supporters in the third world more dependable at the moment than their big Communist allies.

Most of the editorial, in fact, is devoted to the danger that the US will drive a wedge among "fraternal socialist" countries by holding out the prospect of "reconciliation." The writer claims that "principled reconciliation" between big powers is not objectionable, since this would serve to strengthen the position of the "world revolution." He asserts, however, that if the policy of a socialist country is "aimed at caring for its narrow and immediate interests, it will not only harm the revolutionary movements of various countries (read Vietnam), but in the end will bring these very countries incalculable losses and make them give up their lofty internationalist duty."

At one point, in fact, the editorial comes close to accusing the Soviets and Chinese of collusion with the US, and at another place it charges them with uttering "empty words."

The Nhan Dan editorial follows publication of an article in the party ideological journal that likewise contains bitter criticism of Hanoi's two major allies. The tone of the editorial, however, is more acerbic than anything published on this subject in over a year.

Hanoi's biting epithets seem ungracious, given the fact that Peking, and perhaps Moscow as well, have recently entered into new aid agreements with the North Vietnamese. The clear implication is that, despite these agreements, the Vietnamese Communists are deeply disturbed over the way big-power politics are hurting Hanoi's vital interests.

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MOROCCO

The death of Morocco's strong man, Major General Mohamed Oufkir, will increase the tension and instability caused by the attempt on King Hassan's life.

Oufkir directed loyal forces in the initial counterattack, but [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] took his life [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

the Moroccan Government has only reported Oufkir's suicide.

Major General Driss Ben Aomar has been named acting defense minister. He is a loyal and respected army officer, but he lacks Oufkir's drive and formidable reputation [REDACTED]

As was the case in the 1971 coup attempt, most of the rebel officers are Berbers, who resent the predominance of the Arabized political and social elite in Morocco. There is also deep-seated dislike among many educated Moroccans for the King, his sumptuous life style, and his autocratic rule. Hassan's position depends almost entirely on the support of the military and security forces, and the future of the monarchy is now more than ever in jeopardy.

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